

The University of British Columbia
Department of Language and Literacy Education

EDUC 451: Inquiry Seminar II

Tentative Syllabus

Section S18, T/Th 10-12:30, M/W/F 8:30-11:00, Neville Scarfe 1003, Credits: 3

Blog: <http://blogs.ubc.ca/educ451/>

Instructor: Dr. Teresa Dobson

Phone: 604-822-8365

Office: Ponderosa E 218

E-mail: teresa.dobson@ubc.ca

Office hours: By appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Inquiry Seminar II is designed to provide teacher candidates with an opportunity to:

- 1) engage in teacher inquiry around a theme (e.g., the cohort theme such as “sustainability” or “community”), a disciplinary topic (e.g., ‘historical consciousness’ or chemical bonding), a particular curriculum emphasis (e.g., textbooks as cultural and historical objects), or an educational issue (e.g., the politics of French immersion programs) of the teacher candidate’s choosing.
- 2) demonstrate understandings acquired during course work and develop deeper understandings of a particular area of educational study.

The role of the instructor is that of ‘project advisor.’ The students, working in small groups or independently, will construct a proposal for an in-depth study in their identified area of interest. On completion of the proposal, teacher candidates will present their proposal’ in a forum where they will engage their peers in discussion, critique, and feedback.

- Days 1-3: Introduction: Preparing for inquiry (Prospectus)
- Days 4-8: Lab practicum and group consultation sessions: Teacher candidates embark on their inquiries, meeting with the instructor regularly to report on progress and to receive feedback.
- Days 9-12: Representation: Making inquiry results public through such means as school-based poster-sessions or presentations.

Day 1: Proposing an Inquiry I	
Topic	Developing a focus and locating sources
Guiding Questions	What are the stages of inquiry? What are some questions I have about education and schooling, teaching, learning and curriculum? Why are these questions significant, and to whom? How would I pursue my particular interest?
Optional Readings	Cole, A. & Knowles, J. G. (2000). <i>Researching teaching: Exploring teacher development through reflexive inquiry</i> . Part III. Toronto, ON: Allyn & Bacon. Chapter 6: Researching practice and students’ experience, pp. 95-110. Chapter 7: Researching schools, pp. 111-134.

Day 2: Proposing an Inquiry II	
Topic	Identifying a framework for understanding
Guiding Questions	What values motivate my inquiry? What do I currently believe about the object of study? How might my inquiry be situated in the context of the particular writers who study similar questions/concerns? What is the history of my relation to that object of inquiry?
Optional Readings	Fenwick, T. (2000). Expanding conceptions of experiential learning: A review of the five contemporary perspectives on cognition . <i>Adult Education Quarterly</i> , Vol. 50, No. 4, pp. 243-272. Revisit readings from Inquiry Seminar I: Aoki (2005) & Tripp (1990).
Day 3: Proposing an Inquiry III	
Topic	Anticipating and addressing ethical issues
Guiding Questions	What are my ethical responsibilities with regard to those participating in my research and to my collaborators? What ethical issues are raised when a teacher researches?
Optional Readings	Cole, A. & Knowles, J. G. (2000). <i>Researching teaching: Exploring teacher development through reflexive inquiry</i> . Part III. Toronto, ON: Allyn & Bacon. Introduction to Chapter 8: Issues and questions associated with collaborative inquiry pp. 135-140. Chapter 8: Researching teaching through collaborative inquiry with peers, pp. 141-150. Mitchell, I (2003). Ethics and self-study in A. Clarke & G. Erickson (Eds.), Teacher inquiry: Living the research in everyday practice . London, UK: RoutledgeFalmer.
Days 4-8: Laboratory Practicum and Consultation Sessions	
Topic	By the end of Day 3, teacher candidates will have submitted a description of their proposed project for feedback and approval. From Days 4-8, they will engage in inquiries and individuals and groups meet with course instructor for regular reporting and feedback.
Guiding Questions	Questions are determined by the inquiry project.
Readings	Readings are determined by the inquiry project. A bibliography is included with the final report.
Days 9-12: Presentation of Completed Inquiry Projects	
<i>During Weeks/Lessons 9 and 10, teacher candidates would be expected to engage critically with two other projects generated by their peers as well as respond to questions about their own inquiry project from peers; with a view to final refinement for formal presentation and submission.</i>	

Days 11 and 12 of the course will be devoted to formal presentation of the projects to an audience of peers, mentoring teachers and members of the larger community.

2. Assignments: Proposal, Inquiry Project and Presentation (Due dates to be determined by cohort instructor)

The inquiry project will be driven by the teacher candidate's own questions, developing areas of interest and/or identified areas of need. Examples of inquiry projects include inquiry around a theme (e.g., the cohort theme such as "sustainability" or "community"), a disciplinary topic (e.g., 'historical consciousness' or chemical bonding), a particular curriculum emphasis (e.g., textbooks as cultural and historical objects) or an educational issue (e.g., the politics of French immersion programs).

The inquiry consists of three parts: a) **Preparing** the Inquiry Proposal, b) **Conducting** the Inquiry Project, and c) **Presenting** the Final Project. Cohort instructors will determine the due dates for each part of the assignment. Inquiry projects may be conducted individually or by a small group (two or three persons maximum).

a) Inquiry Proposal (Project Prospectus)

Teacher candidates must discuss the specifics of their inquiries with the cohort instructor via the inquiry proposal. Typically, the proposal will consist of the following elements: **a) brief context** (how the question arises and why it is significant), **b) a statement of the research problem or question**, **c) preliminary bibliography in APA or MLA format** documenting related scholarly literature (class readings and other bibliographic references may be included; this bibliography will be expanded through the course and should include at least 8-10 articles from peer-reviewed journals), **d) an outline of the approach to be taken (method)**, including possible sources such as researcher journal, observation sheet, publically-available documents, etc., and **e) expected conclusions**. These elements may vary depending on the nature of the particular inquiry.

The instructor must approve the proposal before the teacher candidate can pursue the inquiry. Proposals will be evaluated according to the integration of theory and practice, educational significance, and benefit to the teacher candidate. **DUE: 4 January (preferably by 1800hrs)**

b) Inquiry Project (Reading Log, Weblog or Wiki contributions)

During the days devoted to teacher candidate independent inquiries, classes will take the form of group consultation sessions with the cohort instructor with the latter taking the role of project advisor. Teacher candidates embark on their inquiries, meeting with the instructor regularly to report on progress and to receive feedback.

Reading Log and Commentaries: Students will keep a reading log documenting what scholarly literature they have read (a minimum of 8 articles from peer-reviewed journals). I am recommending you try <http://www.citeulike.org/> as a way of managing the reading log. Students will also demonstrate knowledge of the literature and engagement with ideas being explored collectively by the class by posting or making comments on the class weblog a minimum of four times, preferably twice in Week 2 (January 7-11) and twice in Week 3 (January 14-18).

c) Inquiry Presentation

The inquiry presentation has ORAL and WRITTEN components:

The *oral component* includes individual or group (in the case of a collaborative inquiry) preparation and delivery of a 10-15 minute class presentation of your inquiry outlining its purpose, central question(s), approach and newfound understandings.

The *written component* includes an *individual* (whether a collaborative or individual inquiry) reflection on the inquiry project's purpose, central question(s), approach and newfound understandings. The written piece should be approximately 1000-1500 words in length and should be posted on the class weblog by **21 January 2013**

The Inquiry Project should reflect an emerging ability to:

- * Engage substantively with a topic as reflected in careful reading of the literature and an understanding of significant issues, perspectives and assumptions
- * Position one self in relation to ideas discussed
- * Consider educational issues critically
- * Relate one's learning to curriculum and pedagogy

SAMPLE INQUIRIES

1. A Child/Youth Study*

A child/youth study will allow teacher candidates to learn to look closely at a child in a field setting and to link what they learn from observations and associated materials to their readings, discussions and other course lectures on children's social, cognitive, physical, moral, emotional and imaginative growth. The goal is to render insightfully one child's thinking and learning, motivation to learn and commitments, aspirations, behaviours, and interpersonal relations as he or she experiences and negotiates the landscape of school. Teacher candidates log observations of and conversations with a child, collect samples of the child's work and engage in conversations with classroom and resource teachers. A final report would focus on questions such as: How is the child growing and developing cognitively, physically, emotionally, socially, and/or imaginatively? To what extent is there a good "fit" between the school environment and the child as a learner? If you were the child's teacher, how would you proceed in the child's best interests?

*In light of the challenges associated with the ethical issues in real classrooms, the child study could be generated using existing films and text that capture teachers' classrooms and their interaction with children in vivid and realistic terms. For example Avoir/Être or "Les choristes" (films) or Spud" (text).

2. Document Analysis

Teacher candidates might elect to describe and critically evaluate: (a) a policy document (e.g., a school district's safe schools policy); (b) a curricular document (e.g., English 12 First Peoples); or (c) a learning resource that pertains to teaching (e.g., the BC Ministry of Education's *Making space: Teaching for diversity and social justice throughout the K-12 curriculum*). Questions shaping the inquiry may be drawn from Aoki's critical evaluation model (2005):

- * What are the perspectives underlying a particular curriculum?
- * What is the implied view of the student or the teacher held by the curriculum writer?
- * Whose interests does the particular curriculum serve?
- * What are the root metaphors that guide the curriculum developer?

- * What is the basis bias of the publisher/author/developer of prescribed or recommended resource materials?
- * What is the curriculum's supporting worldview?

3. Inquiry into a Disciplinary Topic

Being prepared to teach shifts the focus to that which is to be taught and invites teachers to examine the worthiness of the topic and what it might mean to know it well. The point is to cultivate one's own understanding of the topic, enabling one to listen carefully and guide students' own questions and concerns. Inquiry into a topic provides a teacher candidate with the opportunity to identify a topic for exploration, develop a rich understanding of the topic, generate and examine a number of conceptual routes of inquiry into the topic, and make a judgement about the worthiness of the topic.

Such work will likely include library work (literary as well as expository texts; adult and children's resources), discussion with experts in the field, viewing of video (documentary and other) materials and so on. The questions that may guide your inquiry into the topic include

- What is this thing that is going to be taught?
- What is the disciplinary history of the topic?
- What is important, interesting and provocative about it?
- What are the various pathways into and through the topic?
- What does it mean to know it well?
- Why is the topic worthy of children's attention?
- What insights have I gained from my investigations about preparing to teach?

4. A Research Proposal

This option consists of a short version of a proposal. Typically, a research proposal consists of a brief context (how the question arises and why it is significant), a statement of the research problem or question, an abbreviated review of related literature, an explanation of the theoretical framework, an outline of the methodology, including possible data sources, and expected conclusions. These elements may vary depending on the nature of the inquiry (e.g., empirical or conceptual). The proposal could form the basis of the Independent Inquiries pursued in the subsequent terms.

5. Peer Evaluation: A Collaborative Inquiry into Practice

Two teacher candidates will observe one another teach a lesson, paying particular attention to a pre-specified aspect of the lesson (e.g., how students' diverse social locations and various power asymmetries shape patterns of classroom interaction). Based on their observations, they will retrospectively create the plan for each lesson, reflect on their observational field notes, and discuss both of these with one another and with the sponsoring teachers. The two teacher candidates will present their new understandings in a written report.

6. Negotiated Study

Any project deemed to be in the same spirit as the above inquiries (the analysis of a class blog around a particular topic related to teaching and learning in a course)

Readings

- Cole, A. & Knowles, J. G. (2000). *Researching teaching: Exploring teacher development through reflexive inquiry*. Part III. Toronto, ON: Allyn & Bacon.
- Fenwick, T. (2000). Expanding conceptions of experiential learning: A review of the five contemporary perspectives on cognition. *Adult Education Quarterly*, 50(4), 243-272.
- Aoki, T. (2005). Interests, knowledge and evaluation: Alternative approaches to curriculum evaluation. In R. Irwin & W.H. Pinar (Eds.), *Curriculum in a new key: The collected works of Ted T. Aoki* (pp. 137-150). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Tripp, D. H. (1990). Socially critical action research. *Theory Into Practice*, 29(3), 158-166.
- Mitchell, I (2003). Ethics and self-study in A. Clarke & G. Erickson (Eds.), *Teacher inquiry: Living the research in everyday practice*. London, UK: RoutledgeFalmer.

Supplemental Reading for Instructors

- Eisner, E. (1991). *The enlightened eye: Qualitative inquiry and the enhancement of educational practice*. New York: MacMillan Publishing. (Chapters 2 and 9).
- Coulter, D., & Wiens, J. R. (2002). Educational judgment: Linking actor to spectator. *Educational Researcher*, 31(4), 15-25.
- hooks, b. (1994). Theory as liberatory practice. In *Teaching to transgress* (pp. 59-75). New York: Routledge.
- Miller, J. L. (1990). *Creating spaces and finding voices: Teachers collaborating for empowerment*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Popkewitz, T. S. (1997). A changing terrain of knowledge and power: A social epistemology of educational research. *Educational Researcher*, 26(9),18-29.
- Seixas, P. (1993). The community of inquiry as a basis for knowledge and learning. The case of history. *American Educational Research Journal*, 30(2), 305-324.
- Smith, J. (1997). The stories educational researchers tell about themselves. *Educational Researcher*, 26(5), 4-11.
- Tom, A. (1995). Rethinking the relationship between research and practice in teaching. *Teaching & Teacher Education*, 1(2), 139-153.